ISSUE 06

AGRIVIEW

UNE 2007 VOLUME 3

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Minister's Message

Over the past several years, the Government of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan's citizens have embraced biofuels (ethanol and biodiesel) as a means to end our reliance on non-renewable oil, bring new prosperity to rural areas and, most importantly, contribute to the fight against climate change.

Recently, however, several international studies have appeared which have cast doubt on the benefits of biofuels. Some have suggested that biofuels are actually more polluting than petroleum products, once the total cost of growing, transporting and processing the raw material is factored into the equation. Other reports have suggested that the conversion of land from food production to fuel production will lead to wide-spread starvation among the world's poorest people.

These claims fail to consider advancements in technology—advancements that are happening right now, not in the hypothetical future. Furthermore, these claims do not apply to Saskatchewan's unique situation.

Modern farming practices have reduced the amount of energy consumed in the production of biofuel crops, and technology has improved the energy efficiency of biorefineries. Studies conducted by Natural Resources Canada and other agencies have shown that a 10-per-cent blend of wheat-based ethanol and gasoline can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by four to seven per cent; an 85-per-cent blend reduces emissions by 35 per cent. The comparable figures for canola-based biodiesel are a three-per-cent reduction with a five-per-cent blend, and a 12-per-cent reduction for a 20-per-cent blend. Suggestions that it takes more energy to produce a litre of biofuel than is produced when the biofuel is burned have also proven incorrect. Another study by Natural Resources Canada has shown that it takes 0.69 British Thermal Units (BTUs) of energy to produce one BTU of wheat-based ethanol. The figures are even better for biodiesel—one BTU of energy produces three BTUs of biodiesel. Concerns that biofuel production will place high demands on water supplies, increase demand for fertilizer and other crop inputs, and encourage crop production on marginal land do not apply to the Saskatchewan situation. Most of these claims originate from American studies, but American and Canadian biofuel production variables differ greatly. The U.S., for example, uses more water and more fertilizer to produce biofuel feedstock than Canada.

Finally, the concern about competition for crops between the food and fuel markets may apply in countries where land is scarce and populations large, but it does not apply to North America, where, if anything, we produce too much food. Studies in Canada and the United States have shown that agriculture can easily supply enough grains and oilseeds to meet the demands of the human and animal food markets as well as the new biofuel market. It is true that economists are anticipating the new biofuel market will increase the price of grain, at least over the short term, but farmers around the world will see that as a benefit rather than a threat. International subsidies have kept the price of grain below the cost of production, and have created much hardship for those farmers who have not been the beneficiaries of the subsidies. With increased demand for corn, soybeans, wheat and canola, there is an opportunity to reduce subsidy payments. This can only be good news for Canadian farmers.

Ultimately, I believe that biofuel production will be good news for farmers, consumers, the rural economy and the environment. Farmers will have new markets for their crops, consumers will have access to a renewable form of energy, the rural economy will gain jobs through the construction and operation of biorefineries, and the environment will see reductions in human-related greenhouse gas emissions. For these reasons, the Government of Saskatchewan is supporting the development of a biofuel industry in this province.

Mark Wartman
Minister, Agriculture and Food

Western Canada Farm Progress Show

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Western Canada Farm Progress Show. The show is being held in Regina June 20-22, 2007.

The theme of this year's show is "30 Years of Leading the Way." It's a very fitting theme, given the fact that the Western Canada Farm Progress show is widely recognized as Canada's national farm show.

The event has matured into one of the premier agricultural shows in North America, focusing on dry-land agricultural equipment and technology.

More than 40,000 people from nearly 30 countries come to Regina each year to see what's new in agriculture. The show boasts over 700 exhibitors and occupies over 1.4 million square feet of tradeshow space. Everything that is needed to conduct a dryland farming operation will be on display.

Two new featured display areas will be launched at this year's show. The Energy Centre will showcase ethanol, biodiesel, wind power, solar energy, carbon credits,

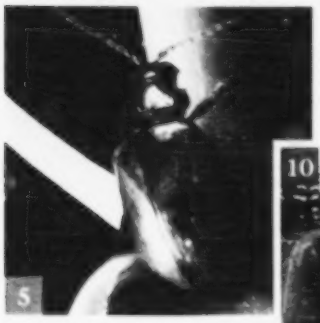
geothermal power and alternative forms of heat. The Heartland Women's Expo is dedicated to country living and will offer value, education and entertainment to women of the prairies.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food is proud to once again be a part of this important event. The show not only showcases our agriculture industry to the world, but it results in hundreds of millions of dollars in business transactions, and promotes the high quality of life we enjoy in this province.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

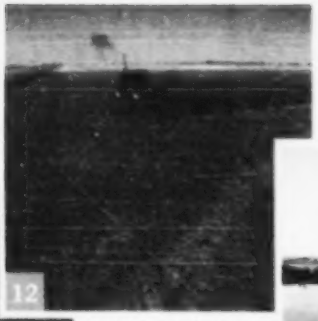
- Visit the website at www.wcfps.com

STORY SNAPSHOTS



Apthona Beetles combat leafy spurge

Yorkton's Garlic Garden thriving



Seeded Acreage Reports due June 25

Protecting surface water quality in the Wood River Watershed

Seeding near Kronau

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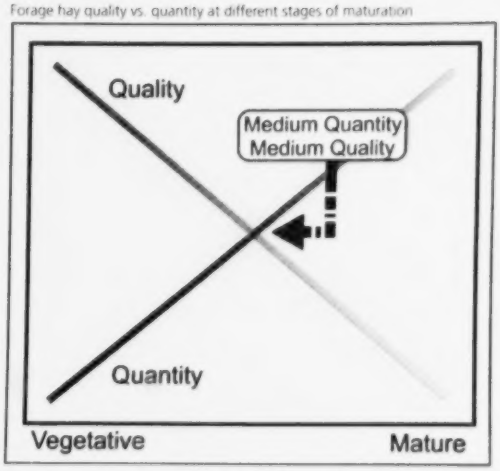
Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food

AGRIVIEW is published by the Communications Branch of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food for Saskatchewan farmers and farm and food organizations. **For more information, call 306-787-5160 or e-mail agriview@agr.gov.sk.ca. To view this publication online, visit www.agr.gov.sk.ca/ProgramsServices.**

Alfalfa forage quality and cutting time

Forage hay quality vs. quantity at different stages of maturation



By Murray Feist
Ruminant Nutrition Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

Hay cutting and harvest issues often involve attempts to maximize yield, which is dictated by the class and type of livestock being fed, i.e. sheep, beef cattle or dairy cattle. Often, the decision to harvest for maximum yield conflicts with the decision to harvest for maximum quality.

Under normal growing conditions, a healthy alfalfa crop will increase in dry matter yield from first growth through to mid-bloom, after which it plateaus. Harvesting alfalfa in the early vegetative stage will result in lower yields versus the full bloom stage, even with only 10 to 20 days difference in cutting date! Alfalfa hay quality will decrease from the mid-bloom to full maturity, due to the fact that from mid-bloom on, the leaf to stem ratio of alfalfa decreases, resulting in higher fibre content and lower digestible energy content.

For example, alfalfa that is harvested for maximum yield could be cut at full bloom, yielding 14-16 per cent protein, 41 per cent acid detergent fibre, 56 per cent neutral detergent fibre and 54 per cent total digestible nutrients (energy). Harvesting for maximum quality at the early vegetative/bud stage may yield 20-22 per cent protein, 25 per cent acid detergent fibre, 35-40 per cent neutral detergent fibre, and 63-65 per cent total digestible nutrients.

Combining a legume/grass forage stand for hay and cutting for tonnage versus quality becomes even more interesting due to the different growth rates and stages of growth between the two or three or four forage species mixtures!

Consequently, if the decision to harvest is to increase quality, one benefit will be an increase in estimated dry matter intake, so that daily nutrient requirements are more readily met. Low quality forages (such as straw) can be consumed up to 1.25 per cent of body weight; medium quality can be consumed from 1.5 to 1.75 per cent of body weight; and high quality forages can be consumed from 1.75 per cent to 2.25 per cent of body weight.

The dry matter intake is linked to total fibre content. High fibre content in straw (80 per cent NDF) limits daily intake; low fibre content in early cut alfalfa (46 per cent NDF) allows for higher daily intake levels. Straw cannot be consumed at high levels because the high fibre content takes longer to digest. Coupled with low energy content, straw is best fed with grain to meet energy and protein requirements. Higher quality forages are more digestible in a shorter time, allowing for higher intakes to better meet energy and protein requirements. This is important during the high demand periods of late gestation and lactation.

Increasing forage quality usually ensures better intake with less feed wasted. Given the variables during the harvesting of forages, it is strongly advised to conduct a feed test prior to feeding any forage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

2007 AGRI-ARM FIELD DAYS

By Shannon Chant
Crop Development Specialist
North Battleford
SAF

The Saskatchewan Agri-ARM (Agriculture-Applied Research Management) Program connects eight regional applied research and demonstration sites into a province-wide network that allows government, producers, researchers and industry associations to partner on provincial and regional projects. Each location has an affiliated producer group that sets the research priorities for that site.

Agri-ARM sites serve as centres for applied research and demonstration, focusing on increasing value from crops and enhancing production efficiency and environmental stewardship in a region.

Agri-ARM core projects include: forage variety testing; pulse inoculant studies; minor use pesticide registration trials; pulse variety trials; cropping systems research; environmental stewardship projects; field evaluation of inputs and equipment; and manure management projects.

Each Agri-ARM location hosts an annual field day showcasing the research undertaken at that location. A number of the field days offer Continuing Education Units (CEU) credits for Certified Crop Advisors and are approved by the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists for professional development hours.

Come join us at the following Agri-ARM Field Days to learn about local research and talk to the researchers, agrologists and producers in your area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Contact your local Agri-ARM site; or
- Call Shannon Chant, Crop Development Specialist, SAF at 1-306-964-1510.

RESEARCH FOUNDATION	LOCATION	DATE	CONTACT
Seager Wheeler Farm	Rosthern	June 8	Ewald Epp 232-5959 ewald.epp@sasktel.net
Sask. Conservation Learning Centre	Prince Albert	July 5	Tom Boyle 953-2362 tboyle@agr.gov.sk.ca
Western Applied Research Corporation	Scott	July 11	Sherrilyn Phelps 247-2011 sphelps@agr.gov.sk.ca
Wheatland Conservation Area Inc.	Swift Current	July 12	Bryan Nybo 778-7289 NyboB@agr.gc.ca
Indian Head Agricultural Research Foundation	Indian Head	July 17	Judy McKell 695-4200 judymckell@yahoo.ca
Northeast Applied Research Foundation	Melfort	July 18	Cecil Vera 752-2776 VeraC@agr.gc.ca
East Central Research Foundation	Canora	July 19	Kim Stonehouse 563-5551 ecrf@sasktel.net
South East Research Farm Inc.	Redvers	July 20	Garth Johnston 452-3161 serf@sasktel.net

Managing wheat midge infestations

By Scott Hartley
Provincial Specialist
Insect/Pest Management
SAF

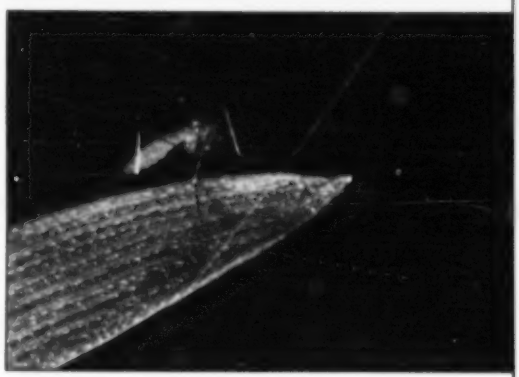
If there's enough moisture, wheat midge adults will begin emerging from the soil by the end of June, primarily in southern regions of the province. Depending on heat units accumulated in an area, you will see most of these flies in the first two weeks of July.

Although the moist dark brown and black soil zones tend to be at higher risk, wheat producers throughout the province should be aware that if midge has been present previously, the potential for economic loss remains if moisture conditions are suitable for the midge. Infestations of this pest will require attention to management strategies. One of the most important aspects relates to the staging of the crop with respect to susceptibility to midge damage. Wheat crops should be monitored from the time the boot splits and the wheat head becomes visible as it starts to emerge, until the flowering stage (anthesis).

Prior to head emergence, the wheat plant is not susceptible to damage. By the time the yellow anthers appear, the plant has developed a natural resistance to the insect. Even if midge numbers exceed economic thresholds, and a plant has completed flowering, damage is minimal and control is not recommended. Generally, by the time 50 per cent of the crop has anthers extruded, the crop is considered resistant to the midge. Control operations performed after anthesis will result in unnecessary cost to the producer, and will have an undesirable effect on the natural, biological control organisms.

The most reliable method of determining the economic threshold of wheat midge is to inspect several locations in the field when the wheat is in the susceptible stage. You should make observations in the evenings when female midge is most active. Midge damage to a wheat crop can result in yield loss and downgrading. If you're worried about yield, use chemical control when monitoring results in an estimate of one midge per four or five wheat heads. If you're protecting the grade of the crop, you should consider these control measures when one midge per eight to 10 wheat heads is present.

Timing of insecticide application is critical in the control of the wheat midge larvae. If the wheat crop is susceptible and the eggs laid by the female midge hatch, the larvae may have time to crawl into the glumes where they are protected from insecticides. Research has shown that insecticides containing the active ingredient chlorpyrifos are the most effective chemical control option for use in managing wheat midge infestations.



Wheat Midge

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit SAF's website, www.agr.gov.sk.ca/Production, under Insects. Titles: Wheat Midge; Wheat Midge – FAQ; and Wheat Midge Forecast; or
- E-mail aginfo@agr.gov.sk.ca; or
- Contact the AKC at 1-866-457-2377.

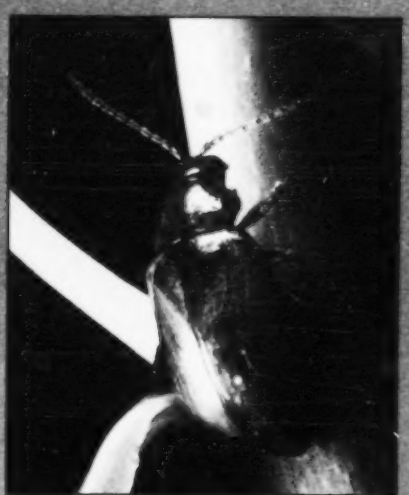
LEAFY SPURGE BEETLES IN SASKATCHEWAN

By Clark Brenzil
Provincial Weed Control Specialist
SAF

Leafy spurge is an aggressive perennial plant that competes so strongly with forage production as to completely eliminate cattle grazing in pastures and over-run native rangeland.

Leafy spurge flea beetles (Apthona sp.) are insects that were originally collected in Europe and released in Saskatchewan in an effort to attack leafy spurge and reduce its impacts. These Apthona beetles will only consume leafy spurge. Apthona larvae, feeding on the roots, cause a reduction in the vigour and density of leafy spurge plants. As in any natural system, even a successful site will always have a few weak leafy spurge plants remaining in balance with the Apthona beetles.

Apthona beetle releases are best suited for large, well established leafy spurge infestations, in conjunction with other integrated management options. The leading edge of the infestation should be contained with herbicides. Apthona beetles are not suited to small localized patches because of a lack of food. Research conducted in North Dakota found established Apthona beetles had reduced leafy spurge density by 65 to 95 per cent or more (Lym and Nelson 2000).



Apthona beetle feasts on leafy spurge. Photo courtesy TEAM Leafy Spurge, USDA-ARS, Sidney, MT, USA.

A review of the Saskatchewan data from release sites over the last few years suggests that the Apthona beetles have been more effective in warmer southern areas of Saskatchewan.

Apthona beetles are heat loving, so south facing slopes and areas with minimal grass thatch are best for releases. Both species of brown beetle (black dot and brown dot) are adapted to sandy soils on higher ground. Black beetles prefer loam or clay soils on lower slopes. Collections are made from existing locations that have high leafy spurge beetle populations.

Redistribution and new releases are best done soon after adult flea beetles begin to emerge in the spring. Delaying will result in female flea beetles having progressively fewer eggs to lay, and will require larger numbers of beetles for successful releases. Usually, a release of 2,000-5,000 Apthona beetles per release site is recommended.

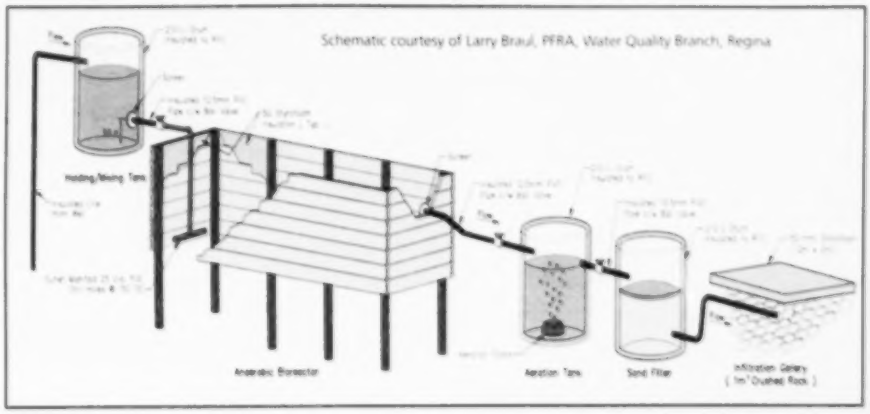
Normally, Apthona flea beetle releases take place between June 15 and July 15 each year in Saskatchewan. Releases made toward the end or after egg laying are of little value.

Story contributors: Nancy Gray and Harvey Anderson, Group Planning Advisors, SARM Invasive Alien Plants Project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit SAF's website, **www.agr.gov.sk.ca/Production**, under Weeds. Titles: Biological Control of Leafy Spurge; Biological Control of Weeds on the Prairies; or
- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377; or
- Contact Clark Brenzil at 306-787-4673; Nancy Gray at 306-787-3115; or Harvey Anderson at 306-933-7695.

Harnessing Mother Nature to improve water quality



By Bob Klemmer, MAgr PAg
Beef-Forage Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

Biological or microbial processes have been harnessed since ancient times to help preserve the foods we eat (sauerkraut), the things we drink (wine), as well as to preserve the quality of cattle feed (silage).

More recently, microbial processes have been used to remove bacterial and chemical components of human effluent (marsh filtration), heavy metals from acid mine drainage (metal sulphide precipitation), and nitrates from water (sandwich dispersion technology).

Here in Saskatchewan, under the direction of PFRA, research scientists from the Western Beef Development Centre (WBDC) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) have teamed up—with PFRA water quality engineers and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food agrologists providing technical support— to develop and test a biological process for removal of sulphates from water.

Water quality surveys of Saskatchewan water used in livestock production reveal that approximately one third of Saskatchewan farms use water that is considered to be above the recommended maximum 1000 mg per litre concentration of sulphate for cattle. High levels of sulphates are associated with trace mineral deficiencies and polioencephalomalacia (PEM) in cattle.

Deficiencies of trace minerals such as copper, zinc and manganese lead to metabolic disorders, reduced weight gain, impaired immune response, and reduced fertility, which costs the cattle industry millions of dollars each year.

Dr. Sue Baldwin and her team at UBC teamed up with Larry Braul at PFRA and Dr. Bart Lardner at the WBDC to do the proof of concept laboratory work and design a working model, currently being tested and refined at the WBDC.

Results from the past two years' work show promise for a practical, cost effective process for farm level application. Work will be done over the next year to make design improvements, addressing issues such as physical size, volume output, and ease of maintenance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

WEED SEEDLING IDENTIFICATION GUIDE REPRINTED

By Clark Brenzil
Provincial Weed Control Specialist
SAF

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's (SAF) Weed Seedling Identification Guide has been reprinted and is now available. The guide is a valuable tool for producers and agronomists. It assists in identifying weeds in the field at the earliest stages, which is critical to effective weed management practices.

Early identification of weed species in a field allows for a wider range of control options, which decrease as time progresses. Choosing the most economical herbicide is only possible when weed species are correctly identified. Early control of weeds in crops not only improves the consistency of control, but also provides better yield response from crops and better return on herbicide investment.

The Weed Seedling Identification Guide has coloured illustrations of the seedling stage of the most common and problematic weeds in Saskatchewan. As the physical characteristics of grass weeds and broadleaf weeds differ considerably, each is outlined in detail. Broadleaf weeds are organized in the guide by cotyledon shape, which is a key feature in young weeds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- To get a copy of the Weed Seedling Identification Guide or for more information, contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food is constantly updating the wealth of information it makes available to Saskatchewan residents. You can download the most current version of any document posted on our website. You can also call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 to request a hard copy of many items. Below is a list of the latest documents posted, as well as the most frequently visited pages, on SAF's website at www.agr.gov.sk.ca.

PULSE CROP INOCULANT PRODUCT INFORMATION
Product name, manufacturer and contact information for pulse inoculants. Visit: Production | Crops | Fertilizer/Nutrients

RED LENTIL PRODUCTION
The majority of world lentil production and trade is in red lentil. What are the market opportunities? Visit: Production | Crops | Overview

GUIDELINES FOR SEED-BORNE DISEASES OF CEREAL CROPS
The importance of seed testing and the value of seed treatments. Visit: Production | Crops | Diseases

STUBBLE SUBSOIL MOISTURE MAP
This map indicates stubble subsoil moisture levels throughout the province. Visit: Production | Crops | Seeding

HAZARDS IN FOOD MANUFACTURING
Biological, chemical and physical hazards. Visit: Food Safety | Monitoring

RECOGNIZING CRUELTY TO LIVESTOCK – FAQS
Recognizing livestock in distress and who to contact. Visit: Production | Livestock | Health

CANADA-SASKATCHEWAN SPECIFIED RISK MATERIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Funding will be available for investment in one-time infrastructure development projects. Visit: Programs and Services.

Feedlot competitiveness survey

By Godwin Pon
Business Attraction and Investment Consultant
SAF

An SAF study of feedlot construction costs shows that Saskatchewan enjoys a significant competitive advantage over Alberta.

The study compared the most significant capital costs associated with feedlot construction, using a 10,000-head feedlot as the basis, and found that land and materials were significantly cheaper in Saskatchewan than Alberta.

The perception in Saskatchewan that the feedlot industry does not have a competitive advantage has hampered expansion and the development of feedlots in the province. This study showed that the perception does not match the reality.

As a starting point for the study, a survey was distributed to feedlot operators in Saskatchewan and Alberta in an attempt to determine the 10 largest capital costs associated with feedlot construction. The participants were asked to rank a list of 15 items to arrive at the top 10 most capital-intensive items in feedlot construction. These were identified as:

- Earthwork
- Pen construction (rough lumber, posts, etc.)
- Land acquisition
- Concrete (i.e. feed bunks)
- Processing barns/handling facilities
- Feed mills
- Machine shop/office building
- Labour (pen and building construction)
- Electricity
- Plumbing

Using these 10 capital items, SAF then contacted suppliers in each province to obtain material costs. While an important component in feedlot construction, several of the items on the list, such as water and road development, earthwork, plumbing and electricity, vary in cost depending on type and location of the land, and are largely site-specific. Since those costs are not influenced by jurisdiction, they were not included in the study.

The total difference between Alberta and Saskatchewan in the capital items compared was $305,554. The difference in land cost between the two provinces was, by far, Saskatchewan's biggest advantage—a difference of $113,920—but lower material costs for several other capital items, such as pen and building construction, also worked to Saskatchewan's advantage.

Though the study did not include all the costs associated with feedlot development, it did focus on the most capital-intensive items associated with feedlot construction, and demonstrated that Saskatchewan has an advantage over Alberta. With knowledge of our advantages and disadvantages, the Saskatchewan beef industry can continue to work to further expand the cattle feeding sector within the province.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Godwin Pon at 306-933-7694; or Sandy Russell, Beef Economist, at 306-933-5570.

CAN SMALL PRODUCERS COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE BIG PLAYERS?

Saskatchewan has a small cattle feeding industry compared to Alberta, but there is no reason why we should continue to be a small player in the Canadian cattle feeding industry.

"Saskatchewan has many advantages to offer the cattle feeding industry," said Craig Klemmer, Livestock Development Specialist with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF). "We have lots of open space and abundant feed."

One factor that has always held back development of our provincial industry is the assumption that producers cannot be competitive unless they are large. Economists call it the "economies of scale." These economies seem to boil down to the ability to sell uniform liner-loads of uniformly finished cattle. There are also efficiencies to be gained through bulk purchases of feedstuffs, professional services, supplies and labour.

But are economies of scale restricted to the big? What if a number of small producers pooled their resources to purchase similar cattle, adopted identical receiving and processing protocols, and then fed them using a common feeding protocol?

Klemmer feels this could hold a lot of potential for the Saskatchewan cattle industry. The animals might be located on a number of smaller feedlots, but the operation would behave as if they were all placed in a single, larger unit. Using a common feeding protocol should ensure that the animals reach market condition simultaneously, allowing the producers to assemble liner-lots of uniform cattle much like any large feedlot.

He notes that the concept could be expanded to include the hiring of a feeding consultant, a veterinarian and even a marketing manager or general manager to oversee the entire operation.

Value-added opportunities might also benefit from this approach. Linking a slaughter and processing plant with the production and marketing pool could result in the development of the sort of unique "pasture-to-plate" product that has proven to be quite successful.

"One thing that has become very clear is that any new processor wanting to enter the marketplace generally does better if it has a product that stands apart from other products," said Klemmer. "In the high-volume/low-margin business of beef production, it's difficult for a new player to compete with the established processors on price alone. There needs to be a special selling point, and to consumers growing wary of mass-produced, factory-farmed food, the pasture-to-plate concept could be that unique difference."

Klemmer feels there is nothing stopping Saskatchewan producers from pursuing the pooling concept more vigorously. He cites a number of successful producer-run co-operatives in the United States as illustrations, including some that have helped to spread the concept in Canada. Similarly, he says there are examples right here in Saskatchewan of cattle producers raising, processing and marketing their own beef.

"There is really no good reason why more of this type of production and marketing can't be done here," he said.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Livestock Development Branch at 306-787-9112; or
- Visit the SAF website at www.agr.gov.sk.ca.

Saskatchewan attends Mexico trade meetings

By James Kettel
Trade Policy Analyst
Policy Branch
SAF

Officials from Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food attended the 17th annual meeting of the Tri-National Agricultural Accord in Monterrey, Mexico, from April 18-21, 2007.

Secretaries, Commissioners, Directors, Ministers and senior government officials from six Canadian provinces, 16 U.S. states and 20 Mexican states worked together to improve understanding and strengthen collaboration among the agricultural sectors of the three countries that are signatories to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The Accord meetings included Tri-National working groups on rural development, trade remedy actions and harmonization, as well as bilateral Canada/U.S., Canada/Mexico and Mexico/U.S. working groups that focused on specific trade related issues relevant to the bilateral participants.

As the Canadian Co-Chair of the harmonization working group, Saskatchewan reported on the activities of the NAFTA Technical Working Group (TWG) on pesticide harmonization and Canadian efforts on veterinary drug registrations.

Saskatchewan tabled a letter received from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency outlining Canada's enhanced feed ban. The letter, which encourages harmonization with Canada's enhanced feed ban on a North American basis, will be forwarded to relevant U.S. and Mexican federal agencies for a response. A meeting of the harmonization working group will be hosted by California this fall. The TWG will be invited to discuss the development of a new five-year strategy for its continuing efforts on harmonization, giving provinces and states the opportunity to provide input.

During the Canada/U.S. working group, Saskatchewan reported on the establishment of the first NAFTA pesticide label. Delegates agreed to forward a letter to federal officials urging both Congress and Parliament to support NAFTA pesticide labels when identical products are registered in both countries. Delegates also agreed to send a letter of invitation to respective federal pesticide management agencies to report on pesticide harmonization at the 2008 Tri-National Agricultural Accord.

Saskatchewan also raised concerns regarding trade in bison products, which was added to the Canada/U.S. working group's work plan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact James Kettel, Policy Branch, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food at 306-787-5139; or
- Visit the website at www.trade.fao.org/ecg/tri/.

WHAT CAN YOU FIND ON SAF'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WEB PAGE?

SAF has a number of agricultural programs and services available for both producers and agri-business.

Livestock brand registration, Feed Grain and Forage Listing Service and the Agri-Value Program are only a few of those listed on the Programs and Services web page. Web links to federal, provincial and non-government agricultural programs and services can also found on the SAF Programs and Services page.

HOW CAN YOU ACCESS THIS INFORMATION?

The easiest way to check out the programs and services that SAF offers is via our website's front page, since the information is only one click away.

On the right-hand side of the front page, you will see the Programs & Services link. This link takes you directly to the Programs and Services page, where the information is listed alphabetically. You can access the information just by choosing one of the links.

There are also a number of different ways to access SAF's programs and services:

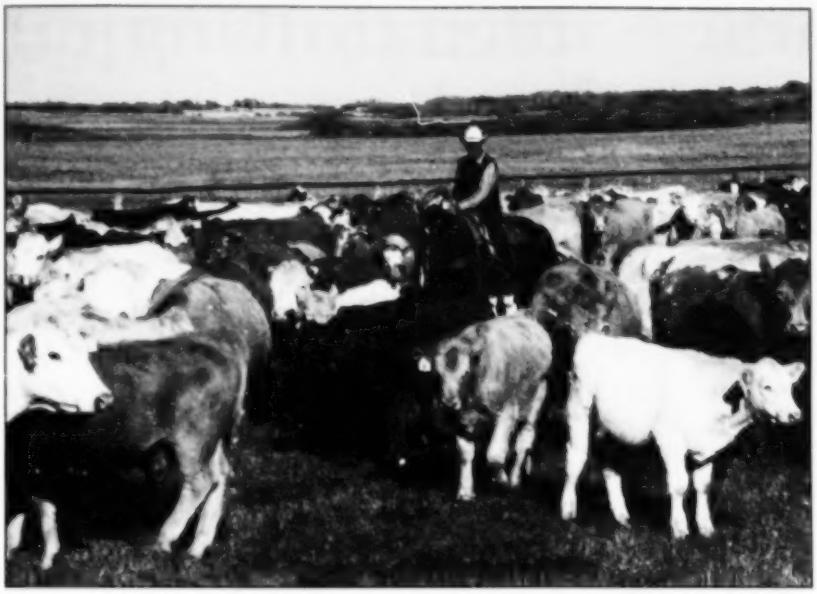
You can go to the Programs and Services page using the address www.agr.gov.sk.ca/ProgramsServices, which brings you directly to the page where you can access the links provided.

A number of the programs are also listed in both the Industry sectors and Lines of Business categories on our site. For example, if you are looking for the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, you can go to the Programs and Services page, the Management | Programs category or the applicable industry category, such as Crops | Wheat | Management.

You can also use the search engine if you know the name (or part of the name) of the program you are looking for and it is located on our site.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO USE SAF'S SEARCH ENGINE

- check out the April 2007 issue of Agriview; or
- visit Agriview online at www.agr.gov.sk.ca/ProgramsServices.



CFIA's new feed ban rules affect producers and processors

By Paul Johnson, PAg
Policy Branch
SAF

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will implement new rules on July 12, 2007, to enhance Canada's feed ban.

These rules will strengthen Canada's safeguards against Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and speed its eradication. On July 12, the CFIA will require all Specified Risk Material (SRM) tissues to be removed and excluded from use in all animal feed, pet food and fertilizer, and to be disposed of in a manner approved by the CFIA.

If you are a cattle producer, the new regulations will exert control over how you dispose of dead animals. The CFIA considers deadstock disposal on premise acceptable and not subject to regulatory control. However, if animal carcasses will be moved from one location to another, transportation permits will be required. Producers are urged to contact CFIA toll free at 1-800-442-2342 to discuss the permitting process.

If you are a beef processor, small or large, the new regulations will control how you handle and dispose of cattle slaughter waste material. Processors that have a contiguous site suitable for disposal of slaughter waste material may be exempt from the CFIA regulation. Those that do not have a contiguous site suitable for waste disposal will be required to make alternate arrangements for disposal at a facility that is licensed by the CFIA. All processors will need to develop standard operating procedures for handling and disposal of cattle slaughter waste material.

If you are a beef processor, small or large, the new regulations will control how you handle and dispose of cattle slaughter waste material.

Processors are encouraged to contact CFIA at 306-975-5809 or 306-691-3466 to learn more about the new requirements for their facility.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, in conjunction with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, have launched the Canada-Saskatchewan SRM Management Program. This program will provide matching funds to eligible and approved infrastructure projects specifically related to SRM handling and disposal.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Visit www.agr.gov.sk.ca/ProgramsServices; or
- Contact SAF in Regina at 306-787-9714, or 1-877-874-5365.

APF: THE NEXT GENERATION

LISTENING TO CANADIANS ON THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD POLICY

Consultations on the next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy are all about meeting and listening to producers and processors from across the country and hearing what they have to say about Canada's agriculture policy and the programs designed to help their businesses grow and prosper.

The consultations, 32 in total, held in communities across Canada, focused on discussions in five thematic areas: environment, food safety and quality, renewal, science and innovation, and market development and trade. The business of agriculture doesn't always allow producers to leave their work to attend a meeting, so an online consultation ran in tandem.

Almost 900 people chose to participate online, and 3,000 individuals and associations were consulted in the first two rounds of consultations. The input received will contribute significantly to the next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy, which will update and enhance the current policy framework that came into effect in 2003.

Throughout the discussions, AAFC heard many inspiring personal stories about innovative farming enterprises operating across the country from the next generation of producers and processors who want to share their optimism about the future of agriculture in Canada.

Many of the women and men at the public consultations had lots to say about the state of the industry and what the future should hold. This was indeed a well suited opportunity to let the people speak and to take note of what was on their minds.

THE FINAL ROUND

Consultations on next generation will conclude with a final round of meetings with industry leaders from associations representing a wide range of interests and involvement in the agriculture and agri-food sector. The input gathered during the first two rounds and a proposed framework for moving forward on a new agriculture and agri-food policy will be discussed during round three.

So far, the process has been successful in stimulating dialogue amongst all stakeholders about how federal, provincial and territorial governments can better work together with those in the industry, to help ensure a competitive and profitable Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call 1-800-O-Canada 1-800-622-6232; or
- Visit **www.agr.gc.ca/nextgen.**

Yorkton's Garlic Garden thriving

Darrel and Anna Schaab run a thriving organic garlic business near Yorkton.

By Rachel Kraynick
Agri-Business Development Specialist
SAF

Garlic is a great business to be in if you're located in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. With consumers' passion for flavourful foods, the demand for Schaabs' garlic is outstripping supply. This heightened demand has the Schaabs planning to double their expansion for the next year!

Darrel and Anna Schaab's garden is located three miles north of Yorkton on Highway #9. A few years prior to establishing their garlic garden, the Schaabs researched production practices of growing garlic, and after some preliminary testing, they realized its potential and capitalized on the opportunity. Initially, they began with a small operation and soon gained the necessary experience and knowledge they needed to produce a high quality product that they market right off the farm.

Currently, the Schaabs are growing a hard neck variety called "Music" which produces four to six large, easy peeling cloves per bulb. They selected this variety based on its suitability to the region's climatic conditions. This variety of garlic is also known to be one of the most powerfully flavoured garlic varieties. All of the bulbs are seeded in the fall, are chemical free, and are sold in either a fresh or powdered form. Selling powdered garlic requires the cloves to be dehydrated, ground, sifted and bottled into the garlic powder.

While all of the products are now sold right off the farm, the Schaabs are looking at creating a website which would allow their buyers to order the garlic powder online. Customers can also expect to see an addition to the market garden this coming year, in the form of an expanded operation that will include corn, cantaloupe and watermelon. Customers can either get this produce ready to go, or pick something that suits their fancy.

With this couple's enthusiasm and ability, the potential for their business appears endless! Anna and Darrel are already thinking about future opportunities within the market garden model, and are considering other marketable products such as cookbooks featuring garlic laden recipes, or custom processing other producers' garlic.

The Schaabs have been using Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's Agri-Business Development Services to help them with their business endeavours. To date, SAF has provided assistance to:

- Help develop a business plan;
- Gain an understanding of the programs, services and supports available to entrepreneurs like them;
- Gain contact information within the industry and among other garlic growers; and
- Gather information on product labelling.

If you are interested in starting your own on-farm business, like the Schaabs, contact your local Agri-Business Development Specialist.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Rachel Kraynick, Agri-Business Development Specialist, at 306-786-1529.

BUILDING ON REGIONAL STRENGTHS THROUGH AGRICULTURAL CLUSTERS

By Katie Funk
Agri-Business Analyst
SAF

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) understands the importance of building on regional strengths. Recognizing that every region has a foundation on which to build, SAF is working with agri-businesses, including farm operations, to identify and build on agricultural clusters within a region.

A cluster can be thought of as a "group of interconnected businesses/companies concentrated in a particular geographic area." Clusters can include a variety of industries and agri-businesses that share a common interest in building on the competitive advantages in their area. Examples of clusters that build on each other's regional strengths include farm operations, agri-businesses, research institutions, trade associations and training programs.

There are many advantages to forming regional clusters, including:

- Identifying growth opportunities for regional advancement;

- Building relationships and opportunities for regional collaboration and co-operation in order to advance agri-business and make individual agri-businesses stronger;
- Creating connections between regional agri-businesses and stakeholders in order to capitalize on collective strengths and build the region's competitive advantage;
- Identifying constraints and impediments to agri-business growth in order that solutions can be formed;
- Helping individual businesses, including farming operations, recognize their strengths and how to build on them; and
- Creating awareness of training and educational offerings which may be of common interest in the region.

SAF engages agri-businesses within the region and creates connections at the grassroots level. We are here to help advance agri-business. By working with our regional clients, we can identify the building blocks of our agriculture sector and create connections to become a stronger and efficient cluster within the region. Our regional team of Agri-Business Development Specialists will help you make the necessary connections to like-minded agri-businesses and industry stakeholders in your region in order to build on your strengths. We also want to hear your success stories of how you've helped our province grow its competitive advantage.

SAF has a team of specialists in nine regional offices available to work with individuals and communities interested in building on opportunities for agriculturally based economic development in their region. This team of specialists understands the importance of working with new and existing agri-businesses to grow the economy and to build on the opportunities that are available locally in your region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Katie Funk at the Agri-Business Development Branch at 306-798-4089.

Improving your income

The agricultural sector is evolving rapidly to keep pace with technology and the changing global marketplace. Producers are continually adapting, and their operations are becoming more complex. They are acquiring knowledge, developing new skills, and incorporating strategic planning and management activities on an ongoing basis. Farm managers are life long learners: learning new skills, enhancing existing skills, and contributing to the competitiveness of Canada's agricultural sector.

To support farm families in these efforts, the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan have offered the Canadian Agricultural Skills Service (CASS). This program has been implemented to provide funding to farmers, beginning farmers and their spouses to develop a learning plan, and undertake education and training that will help them gain valuable skills and knowledge. Since the program's inception in June 2005, more than 5,000 Saskatchewan producers have applied.

CASS is designed to help farmers and their spouses increase their family income by:

- improving farm practices;
- building new agricultural enterprises;
- creating new business ventures;
- obtaining employment income.

Eligible participants will complete a skills assessment, develop an Individual Learning Plan, and receive financial support for education and training activities that will help them gain the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve their goals.

CASS supports training to enhance or develop the skills and knowledge essential to achieving your plans for:

- improving your practices in farm production, and/or farm business management;
- gaining employment;
- creating or expanding a business venture.

WHO CAN APPLY?

You and your spouse may be eligible for CASS assistance if:

- you are an established producer, with annual gross farm sales of at least $10,000 per year, and a net family income of less than $45,000 (three-year average);
- you are a beginning farmer who has owned/operated a farm for less than six years, or intends to establish a farm that has, or will have, annual gross farm sales of at least $10,000;
- you have been out of high school for at least two years;
- you are not currently receiving Employment Insurance benefits.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call toll free 1-888-887-7977;
- Visit www.agr.gov.sk.ca/ProgramsServices; or
- Visit www.agr.gc.ca/farmrenewal and click "Canadian Agricultural Skills Service" button.

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL SKILLS SERVICE (CASS) PROGRAM

"To other people considering taking advantage of CASS, I would say go for it."

–Dawn Anhorn, CASS participant

The CASS program provides farm families with planning and financial support for education and training.

Each program deadline means that farmers need to plan ahead in order to allow enough time to get their application approved and learning plans completed before courses begin. It may take over a month to complete the program application and Individual Learning Plan process.

Learning plans are developed in consultation with a Regional College career counsellor, whose availability may be limited during the busy training season in the fall and winter. Apply now and get your plan established well before classes begin.

GET YOUR CASS LEARNING PLANS APPROVED BEFORE CLASSES BEGIN

CONTACT THE CASS PROGRAM TOLL FREE AT 1-888-887-7977

Seeded Acreage Report Submission Deadline is June 25

Saskatchewan Crop Insurance reminds customers to submit their Seeded Acreage Reports declaring all seeded acres by June 25 in order to make sure insurance coverage is in place for 2007.

As a Crop Insurance customer, you are required to complete a Seeded Acreage Report recording both insured and uninsured acres. Crop Insurance uses the information provided in the reports to calculate your level of insurance and process any claims you may have, including unseeded acreage.

Beginning in 2007, all customers will complete a new Seeded Acreage Report form which includes additional information requirements. Customers are also required to report all stored grain on the personalized Stored Grain Declaration form enclosed with your Seeded Acreage Report package. Remember, all prior year's production must be accounted for or it will be considered new production in the event you file a claim. Crop Insurance will be verifying stored grain reports, so it is important to ensure your records are accurate.

Seeded Acreage Report packages were mailed to customers in May. However, if you did not receive or have misplaced your form, blank copies are available online at www.saskcropinsurance.com under Forms. Completed reports can be submitted by phone, mail, fax, or office visit. Customers who are registered under Crop Insurance's CropConnect program can also complete their personalized Seeded Acreage Reports online.

A penalty may be assessed if you fail to submit or are late in submitting your report and, if necessary, a Crop Insurance adjuster will visit your farm to gather the required information at an additional charge. If you suffer a crop loss and have not reported your seeded acreage by the June 25 deadline, your claim may be denied.

Once your Seeded Acreage Report has been submitted, you will receive a Statement of Insurance listing your insured crops, total number of acres, production guarantee and premium. Premiums are due upon receipt but will remain interest free until October 31, 2007. It is important that you review your Statement of Insurance and report any errors to crop insurance.

If you endorsed crops under the multi-peril contract of insurance and excess spring moisture prevents you from seeding your usual acreage before June 20, you may qualify for an Unseeded Acreage claim of $50 per eligible acre. For more information, contact your customer service office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- If you have questions or would like assistance in completing your Seeded Acreage Report and Stored Grain form, contact Saskatchewan Crop Insurance at 1-888-935-0000. Our toll-free number will put you in touch with the nearest available customer service office, where staff are ready to answer any questions you may have.

WILD RICE INSURANCE PILOT PROGRAM

Saskatchewan Crop Insurance's Wild Rice Insurance Pilot Program has received outstanding support from the province's wild rice producers, with 129 harvesters participating in the program during its premiere year.

"Saskatchewan's evolving agricultural industry encompasses many diverse markets with specific challenges and needs," said Lorelei Hulston, Research and Development Executive Manager for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance. "By working closely with representatives of the industry, Crop Insurance was able to develop a program that meets the unique needs of producers who grow and harvest wild rice."

Crop Insurance regularly consulted members of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Saskatchewan Wild Rice Council Inc., Prince Albert Grand Council and La Ronge Industries, as well as Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's wild rice specialist and other individual producers, throughout the design and development of the program. The corporation also took a unique approach to selling the program to producers, who are largely located in the province's remote northern communities, by contacting harvesters individually and holding information sessions to discuss the program in person.

Saskatchewan's wild rice industry has experienced three consecutive years of poor production due to high water levels and cool temperatures. The program received positive feedback from harvesters, both large and small, who now have the option to insure against similar losses in the future.

The Wild Rice Pilot Program is an area-based insurance program based on average yields in three regions in the Northern Administration District (NAD). A producer's coverage is based on the average production in each region in which they harvest. Crop Insurance uses information provided by wild rice growers and buyers to determine these averages.

As with other Crop Insurance programs, premium is based on the number of licensed acres insured and is cost shared 40 per cent by the producer and 60 per cent by governments. Claims are triggered when a region suffers a loss, due to an insurable cause of loss, and the region's annual production is below the historical average.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For information on this or any other Crop Insurance program, visit www.saskcropinsurance.com.

In the field or in the yard, protect yourself against West Nile Virus

By Karen Hill
Communications
Saskatchewan Health

Saskatchewan farmers and farm families are starting to spend long days in the yard, garden and field. Although mosquitoes may seem like a minor nuisance, Saskatchewan Health reminds you to protect yourself as we enter West Nile Virus (WNV) season.

"Because their workplace is outdoors, producers are at an increased risk of contracting West Nile," says entomologist Phil Curry, Saskatchewan provincial WNV co-ordinator. "Even if you're stepping outside for just a few minutes, take a second to put on repellent and proper shoes."

Although the mosquito that carries WNV is more common in Saskatchewan from mid-July to early September, take precautions whenever you're outdoors. Remember to cover up and use a mosquito repellent. Mosquitoes are attracted to dark colours like navy and black, so wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved, light-coloured clothing and a hat. Apply an appropriate mosquito repellent (DEET-based is best) on your exposed neck and hands. One application will not last all day; remember to reapply according to the directions.

It's also recommended that you decrease time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active. Though mosquito activity does increase as the sun goes down, they spend their days resting in shaded spots, like outbuildings, and in long grass. Summer haying puts producers at an even higher risk.

One of the best ways to reduce WNV risk is to eliminate standing water around your home and livestock pens and corrals. Even small amounts may produce mosquitoes. Clear yards of debris, puddles, and regularly clean and empty any items (eaves troughs, tires, equipment) that collect water. Flush water troughs once a week and keep rain barrels covered. Gravel anywhere that livestock leaves hoof-prints that can fill with water and produce mosquito larvae.

Remember, there is no vaccine or cure for WNV. Although the majority of people who contract the virus experience no or mild symptoms, there is still a risk of contracting the more serious neurological syndrome. These symptoms (high fever, headache, disorientation, muscle weakness, convulsions) are more severe and may result in permanent damage or death.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit www.health.gov.sk.ca; or
- Call Saskatchewan Health at 1-800-667-7766.

PESTICIDE SAFETY TRAINING FOR EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONALS

By Cameron Wilk, PAg
Manager, Regulatory Services
Pesticide Regulatory Management
SAF

Pesticide safety training may not be the first thing that comes to mind when your pesticide application equipment malfunctions in the field, but for the service technicians who are called upon to fix the problem, this training is very important.

What sort of precautions do you need to take when bringing in a sprayer? The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) now offers a short course for the workplace that can help minimize safety risks.

"Staff at one of the local dealerships who indicated they do a fair bit of repairs on high-clearance sprayers approached us," said David Warnock, Pesticide Safety Programs Instructor at SIAST. "Some of them were a little nervous about dealing with these machines after they had been out in the field, and they needed to find out about the risks and the best procedures when working on the equipment."

"We staged a one-day workshop where an instructor from SIAST went to the dealership to go through the basic information related to pesticides with the technicians," said Warnock. The course teaches staff how to address some of the hazards, and which products are of particular concern.

The program is customized so the instructor spends time with the staff, and plans a workplace program that helps them deal with situations in their particular facility.

"It is a great program," said Warnock. "They've told us that it gives them confidence in going to their employer and saying there are ways to adjust our habits and in some cases, make a small investment in making the workplace safer."

SIAST has offered machinery operation and maintenance training on campus, and developed relationships with machinery dealers throughout the province.

"Employers appreciate learning what the best practices are," said Warnock.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Pat Flaten, PAg, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), 306-798-4036; or
- Visit SIAST's website at www.siast.sk.ca.

Protecting surface water quality in the Wood River Watershed

By Wayne Gosselin
Environmental Policy Specialist, Policy Branch
SAF

The Wood River Riparian Authority, based in Gravelbourg, is implementing an Agri-Environmental Group Planning (AEGP) project that involves local producers.

Wood River Group Planning Advisor Shelley Hirstwood has worked to raise awareness of the Wood River project and to encourage local producers to initiate Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) on their land.

"The Wood River project has excelled beyond the original expectations and people are excited about getting involved," Hirstwood said. "Farmers are excellent stewards of the land, and this group project is giving them the encouragement, technical assistance and incentives to go ahead with things that they have always wanted to do, but couldn't afford."

The AEGP project began with consultation workshops in Mankota and Lafleche in June 2006. Participants decided that protection of surface water quality was the priority agri-environmental issue. The group also decided it would concentrate on Thompson Lake, since it provides water for Gravelbourg, Lafleche, and surrounding areas.

Through the group plan, producer members in the watershed are eligible to apply for federal cost-shared incentives for implementing BMPs that directly address their priority issue. The group selected BMPs related to wintering site management, relocation of livestock facilities and riparian area management.

Hirstwood has focused on farm visits and technical workshops. To date, there are about 45 individual producer projects in the beginning stages of implementation, with the majority involving alternative watering sites, portable windbreaks, fencing and buffer establishment. She said the Wood River project has partnered with other agencies to host technical workshops held in Aneroid, Mankota, Coderre, Hazenmore, Kincaid, Glentworth, and other towns in the area.

The Wood River project is important for economic development in the district, says Kirk Clements, Economic Development Officer for the Town of Gravelbourg, and the Administrator of the Red Coat Regional Economic Development Authority.

"Gravelbourg's economic development tries to focus on green projects as much as possible," Clements said. "We are pleased to see that this project is off to a great start, and I look forward to seeing the changes in the health of the watershed over time."

The Wood River Riparian Authority is responsible for the Wood River Watershed, which is part of the internally-drained Old Wives Lake basin in South-Central Saskatchewan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Shelley Hirstwood, Wood River Group Planning Advisor at 306-648-3525; or
- E-mail Shelley Hirstwood at wrriparian@sasktel.net.

WEBSITE CREATED FOR OBSOLETE PESTICIDE COLLECTION CAMPAIGN

By Wayne Gosselin
Environmental Policy Specialist, Policy Branch
SAF

A website has been launched to provide information to Saskatchewan producers about the Saskatchewan Obsolete Pesticide Collection Campaign to be held Oct. 23-25, 2007.

The campaign is a repeat of those held in the province in 1999-2001. The collection will be a province-wide blitz, and will provide free, safe disposal of de-registered, outdated, unwanted or otherwise obsolete agricultural and commercial pesticides.

The collected pesticides will be safely packaged before being transported for safe disposal at a facility approved by Saskatchewan Environment.

Collection sites around the province will be publicized during the summer months, and they will also be posted on the website.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- See the website www.agr.gov.sk.ca/pesticidecollection; or
- Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377; or
- E-mail aginfo@agr.gov.sk.ca.

Saskatchewan
CleanFARMS
OBSOLETE PESTICIDE COLLECTION CAMPAIGN
HOME
NEWS
MAP
F.A.Q's
SITES
October 23 to 25, 2007
The Saskatchewan Obsolete Pesticide Collection Campaign will provide free, safe disposal of de-registered, outdated, unwanted or otherwise obsolete agricultural and commercial pesticides during a province-wide blitz from October 23 to 25, 2007.
The collected pesticides will be safely packaged before being transported for disposal at a facility approved by Saskatchewan Environment.
For more information contact:
Agriculture Knowledge Centre
Toll Free: 1-866-457-2377
Fax: (306) 694-3938
E-mail: aginfo@agr.gov.sk.ca

Check out the Obsolete Pesticide Collection Campaign website at

New herd to advance research in beef industry

The federal and Saskatchewan governments are providing $1.1 million to replace the research herd and purchase new equipment at the Western Beef Development Centre (WBDC) near Lanigan.

WBDC Vice President of Operations Paul Jefferson says the current research herd is a commercial, mixed-breed herd. This can sometimes diminish the certainty of the results drawn from studies done on the cattle, particularly in some of the newer research fields that are becoming increasingly popular with scientific and technological advances.

"A herd with a known genetic background would be useful for the type of work that's going forward into the future, where molecular genetics would be applied to understanding the genotypes of the animals and how this affects their performance and other aspects of beef production," Jefferson said.

> "Having a herd with a known background and known genetics is a terrific boost to the WBDC's efforts."
> —Paul Jefferson, WBDC

As a result, a proposal was submitted to purchase a new purebred herd for the WBDC. Of the $1.1 million provided, a portion will be used to obtain approximately 300 new cows. "These will be two- and three-year-old cows of known genetic background from a purebred source. Our intent is to buy 100 cows per year over a three-year period and phase them into our operation."

This will enable the WBDC to wind up its existing research studies using the current herd before they are phased out and replaced with the new animals.

The balance of the funding will go towards facility and equipment improvements necessary to conduct beef research.

Having a herd with a known background and known genetics is a terrific boost to the WBDC's efforts, Jefferson noted. It will enable researchers to study the effects of various treatments on cattle and determine with greater certainty that their observations are a result of the treatment rather than some previously unknown factor in the animal's genetic history.

"While it's difficult to ever draw an absolute, 100-per-cent conclusion, we will be able to pinpoint with greater accuracy what's causing the difference in the reaction of an animal to the treatment, and make our statements accordingly," he stated.

With 21,000 producers in the province's cow-calf industry, Jefferson says the funding is not only good news for cattle research in Saskatchewan, but also for individual farmers.

"So much of the work we do has a direct, practical application on the farm or ranch. One of the projects we've been undertaking looks at low-cost winter feeding. We've been able to show that you can reduce the cost of over-wintering a beef cow herd by up to 25 per cent. That's a significant cost reduction to the commercial cow-calf producer," he noted.

"So I think the information that will come from this research will continue to have that kind of impact – reducing production and operating costs to the average producer, and improving competitiveness."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit WBDC's website at www.wbdc.sk.ca.

ORGANICS

ORGANIC EXPORTERS GET A BOOST

Saskatchewan's organic sector is getting a boost with the expansion of a successful financing program for exporters.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) is providing $1 million for companies exporting organic or "natural" branded agricultural products through the nextrade™ program.

The nextrade™ initiative is administered by STEP—the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership—and provides customized financing for small and medium-sized exporters. Basically, it provides flexible financing to cover the costs of doing business abroad, such as the input costs required to fill a large order.

The program has been a huge success, having financed over $9.6 million in export sales. The new investment from SAF will enable nextrade™ to focus on one of its biggest clients—the organic sector—but it will also benefit all other exporters.

"By creating this separate fund dedicated to the sale of organics and natural products, the injection will also create more room in the balance of the nextrade™ finance fund to serve the increased demand from all other sectors," said STEP CEO Dale Botting.

The agriculture and agri-value sectors account for over half of the value of all nextrade™ transactions, and the organic sector accounts for 90 per cent of agricultural transactions.

Saskatchewan is Canada's leading exporter of organic products. The province has the largest acreage of certified organic farmland in Canada, as well as the largest number of certified organic producers.

SAF Minister Mark Wartman says the funding will meet an important market demand.

"We wanted to ensure that STEP has the resources it needs to meet the demands of our growing organic sector, both now and in the future," said Wartman.

"This announcement is a testament to our excellent public-private partnership between STEP and the Saskatchewan government," Botting said.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Glen Millard (STEP) at 306-787-7936; or Doris Morrow (SAF) at 306-787-6588.

EVENTS CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	PHONE	EMAIL / WEBPAGE
May 31	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation: Under the contract price option, deadline to provide contract information	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation	1-888-935-0000	www.saskcropinsurance.com
June 4 - 8	Business Retention and Expansion International Conference	Regina	306-787-2201	www.brei.org
June 4 - 6	Food vs. Fuel: The Implications for Agricultural Research Policy	U of S Campus, Saskatoon	306-966-8419	www.kis.usask.ca/FoodvsFuel.html
June 10	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation: Claims on extension deadline	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation	1-888-935-0000	www.saskcropinsurance.com
June 10 - 14	Plant Canada 2007	Saskatoon	306-956-7260	www.plantcanada.ca/2007.htm
June 11	Business Plan Workshop, Module 3	Saskatoon	306-668-2652	www.agwest.sk.ca/events/businessevents.php
June 13	Livestock Emergency Response Course	Saskatoon	306-249-3227	facs@sasktel.net
June 13	2007 Saskatchewan Pasture School	Saskatoon	306-966-2148	jbruynooghe@saskforage.ca
June 15	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation: Deadline for planting potatoes (seed varieties).	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation	1-888-935-0000	www.saskcropinsurance.com
June 19	Specified Risk Material Disposal Seminar	Saskatoon Travel Lodge	306-933-5357	wdehod@agr.gov.sk.ca
June 20-22	Western Canada Farm Progress Show	Regina	306-781-9219	www.wcfps.com
June 20	Native Prairie Appreciation Week	Cypress Hills	306-778-8294	www.pcap-sk.org/
June 20	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation: Under Forage Estab Benefit Option, seeding deadline for acres seeded in 2007.	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation	1-888-935-0000	www.saskcropinsurance.com
June 23	Beef Development Centre Field Day	Termuende Research Farm, Lanigan	306-682-3139	bfreistadt@parni.ca
June 25	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation: Deadline to submit Seeded Acreage Reports (excludes greenfeed) Deadline to submit Unseeded Acreage claims	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation	1-888-935-0000	www.saskcropinsurance.com

IRRIGATION FIELD DAY TOUR AND TRADE SHOW 2007

FOOD AND FUEL

Thursday, July 12

At the Canada-Saskatchewan Irrigation Diversification Centre (CSIDC)

901 McKenzie St. South

Outlook, Saskatchewan

Agenda

Coffee and donuts: 8:30 a.m.

Trade show begins: 9 a.m.

Three field tours: 8:45 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Tours are about 1.5 hours

Presentations and speeches at 10:30 a.m.

Lunch on site from 12 - 1:30 p.m.

Free admission

Highlights

- Specialty crops; strawberry crowns and potatoes
- Crop varieties for ethanol production
- Irrigation systems and water management
- Organic vegetable production
- Fruit orchards

For more information about the Field Days, phone CSIDC at 306-867-5400.

For more information about irrigation in Saskatchewan:

- **visit the ICDC/SIPA website at www.irrigationsaskatchewan.com; or**
- **visit the CSIDC website at www.agr.gc.ca/pfra/csidc/csidc.htm; or**
- **visit Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's website at www.agr.gov.sk.ca.**

Saskatchewan!